

**Remarks/Arguments**

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

**Claim Status**

Claims 1-46 were previously presented. Claims 23-46, which were withdrawn from consideration as a result of the previous restriction and election of claims 1-5 and 7-22, are canceled. Accordingly, after entry of this amendment claims 1-5 and 7-22 are pending.

**Claim Objections**

Claim 22 is objected to as not further limiting claim 15. In response, claims 22 is amended to depend from claim 21 as suggested.

**Claim Rejections – 35 USC 112**

Claims 1-5 and 7-22 are rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. In response, claims 1, 7, 8, 12 and 16-18 are amended to correct the antecedent basis problems noted in the action. In addition, applicant has carefully reviewed the claims and has noted and corrected further antecedent basis problems in claims 4, 9, 13, 14, 19 and 20.

**Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103**

Claims 1-5 and 7-22 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Kennedy et al. (USP 6,167,380) (“Kennedy”). In response, independent claims 1, 12, 16 and 17 are amended to recite features that are neither shown nor suggested by Kennedy.

The Action indicates that Kennedy discloses an order allocation management method in which a parts list is created after allocating parts existing in an inventory list based on order information, but admits that Kennedy does not disclose that parts are reallocated according to priority. In reference to this missing limitation, the action contends that it would be an “obvious design choice” to one of skill in the art because it is well known in business to have confirmations in place to ensure that the customer has in fact made a request to thereby eliminate needless work by a manufacturer/seller. Applicant traverses this suggestion and has

amended independent claims 1, 12, 16 and 17 to clarify and distinguish its novel method by which parts are reallocated.

As discussed in applicant's specification, after issuing a quotation to a customer, it may take some time to receive an official order from the customer or, even if an official order is received from the customer, it may not be possible to ship the ordered parts before actually receiving payment from the customer. In the meantime, orders may be received from other customers via the computer network. If parts are allocated to orders from other customers while keeping parts allocated to the customer for whom the quotation was issued, the parts allocated for that customer cannot be shipped until an official order is received from that customer. To solve this problem, the present invention provides unique features from the quotation issuance to final allocation:

- allocating parts based on order priority information after checking an inventory list in response to a quotation request from a customer;

- issuing a quotation to the customer based on the allocation information; and

- reallocating the parts based on the order priority information when an official order is received from the customer and confirmed.

By implementing this process, parts can be allocated in response to a quotation request from a customer, and a quotation can be issued based on the allocation information. Then, parts can be reallocated when the order is confirmed, and if parts allocated to another customer remain because the order for such parts was canceled, for example, they can be allocated to the customer to whom the quotation was issued. Accordingly, a "first-come, first-served" system for parts is provided rather than a "first-come, last-served" situation.

Independent claims 1, 12, 16 and 17 are amended to include the novel parts allocation and reallocation steps discussed above. These steps are neither disclosed nor suggested by Kennedy, and are not an "obvious design choice". They provide a

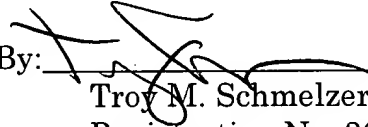
novel solution to a problem that was not appreciated by Kennedy. In this regard, should the next Action assert that these novel steps are an obvious design choice, applicant respectfully requests and is entitled to a citation of prior art in support of this position.

### **Conclusion**

This application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned to resolve any issues that remain after entry of this amendment. Any fees due with this response may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,  
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